

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Biological Survey

DIVISION OF INFORMATION

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At Least 150 Kinds of Animals
Found on Hart Mountain Refuge

Although the Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge, in the southeastern corner of Oregon, was established in 1936 primarily for the preservation of pronghorned antelopes, it now is also a haven for at least 36 other mammals and 120 kinds of birds. This fact was recently made public in a bulletin of the Bureau of Biological Survey, United States Department of the Interior, describing the 215,516-acre sanctuary.

Among the mammals seen on the refuge are antelopes, squirrels, rabbits, pocket gophers, mountain lions, bobcats, and otters. Included in the list of resident and other birds are Canada geese, quails, hawks, owls, swallows, warblers, kinglets, and sparrows.

Hart Mountain is one of the more interesting of the 266 national wildlife refuges administered by the Biological Survey, because it is a haven for so many forms of wildlife. The animal inhabitants range from those that live in hot semi-deserts, among the sagebrush at the base of the mountain, to those that thrive in the coolness of the mountain tops.

The area has often been likened to an oasis in a desert.

Towering 3,400 feet above Warner Valley, the summit of Hart Mountain affords one a view of Poker Jim Ridge, Antelope Valley, Twelve Mile Creek, Pelican Lake,

Coyote Hill, Mugwump Lake, and other colorfully named areas that probably were first seen by white men in 1804-5. The first recorded visit by white men, however, was in 1843 when the Fremont Expedition penetrated the Hart Mountain country.

The new bulletin, written by Stanley G. Jewett, a biologist of the Survey's Division of Wildlife Refuges and a student of the fauna and the history of Oregon for some 30 years, contains an account of the struggles of the pioneers who first settled the area.

Indians, rustlers, and the cold winters are described as obstacles the pioneers had to combat before they could conquer the area. To control the Indians and cattle thieves, the Army in 1867 established a military post on what is now "Post Field" in the Hart Mountain Refuge. The winters, however, were almost unbearable.

In 1866-67, conditions were so severe that the post had to move to lower altitudes to avoid the cold blasts that swept down the mountainside. During the coldest period, the entire company marched in the snow all one night to keep from freezing. A sergeant became lost and perished.

Some animals that lived on Hart Mountain in former years are no longer seen there. Tourists visiting the sanctuary occasionally see skeletons of species that inhabited the area in the late 1800's but have since been extirpated. As recently as 1889, older Indians recalled that buffaloes roamed the eastern Oregon plains. In 1929, ribs of a buffalo were found on the refuge proper.

Another species that was extirpated there is the bighorn, and it is thought that the rim-rock form of this species, which was on this area, is now extinct.

This native wild sheep was common on Hart Mountain until comparatively recent years. . Old sheep horns and skulls are still occasionally picked up within the refuge. Recently a herd of 23 Rocky Mountain bighorns was transferred from the National Bison Range, in Montana, to Hart Mountain by the Biological Survey in an effort to restore the species to this section of its former range.

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